



Attorney Docket: 525/50004
PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicants: SATOSHI YUZAWA ET AL.

Serial No.: 09/862,997

Examiner: B. Zeade

Filed: MAY 23, 2001

Group Art Unit: 2875

Title: WOOD-BASED DECORATIVE ARTICLE AND METHOD OF
MANUFACTURING THE SAME

REPLY

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

Applicants' representative wishes to thank Examiners Zeade and Husar for the courtesy extended during the personal interview conducted on September 15, 2004. A separate record of the substance of this interview is included in the remarks which follow.

In the Office Action dated June 29, 2004, independent claim 16 is rejected, along with various dependent claims, as unpatentable over U.S. Patent 3,977,449 to Sadashige in view of U.S. Patent 6,129,985 to Ohsumi et al. Reconsideration of this rejection is requested for reasons discussed during the interview and reiterated below.

Claim 16 defines a wood-based decorative article comprising a veneer

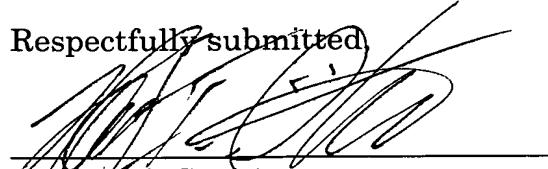
formed by slicing wood and having a transparent property, and a substrate formed of a transparent synthetic resin and joined to a rear surface of that veneer. As noted during the interview, advantages provided by a wood-based article as specified in claim 16, with a transparent substrate joined to a rear veneer surface, include the enhanced finish characteristics discussed, for example, in lines 19-31 on page 13 of the specification.

On page 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner notes that the Sadashige process does not utilize or result in a substrate formed of a transparent synthetic resin and joined to a rear veneer surface. The Ohsumi et al. transparent synthetic resin layer 3 is injection-molded on the front rather than rear surface of the wooden overlay sheet 1. As discussed, therefore, the Sadashige and Ohsumi et al. patents, taken as a whole, do not suggest the wood-based article of the invention, since neither of these documents suggests a substrate formed of a transparent synthetic resin and joined to a rear surface of a veneer as claim 16 defines. The other secondary references relied on by the Examiner in sections 4-6 on pages 3-5 of the Office Action also fail to suggest modifying the Sadashige process so as to utilize or result in a substrate formed of a transparent synthetic resin and joined to a rear veneer surface as claim 16 specifies and, as was tentatively agreed during the interview, claim 16 is patentable. The remaining, dependent claims of this application are patentable as well.

This application is now in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions after considering this Reply, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned attorney.

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Date: September 16, 2004

Respectfully submitted,


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